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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

1. **Beaches remain posted at Beeds Lake, Backbone Lake and Rock Creek Lake**
2. **Iowa schools make huge cuts in bus emissions**
3. **DNR revises forms for turkey/chicken size requirements**

BEACHES REMAIN POSTED AT BEEDS LAKE, BACKBONE LAKE AND ROCK CREEK LAKE; RE-TESTING BEING DONE AT BIG CREEK, NINE EAGLES, GEODE AND NORTH TWIN

DES MOINES — Swimming advisories will remain posted at Beeds Lake in Franklin County, Rock Creek Lake in Jasper County and Backbone Lake in Delaware County. All three of these beaches are on the list of eight lakes in Iowa that have had a history of high bacteria levels in the past, so advisory signs are posted immediately.

Lakes that are being re-sampled this week are Big Creek in Polk County, Geode in Henry County, Nine Eagles in Decatur County and North Twin in Calhoun County. None of these lakes have had a history of bacteria problems in previous years of monitoring. All have been re-tested and if the levels continue to be high, advisory signs would be posted next week.

The beach at Beeds Lake had an E. coli bacteria reading of 650 which exceeds the standard for a one-time sample result of 235. Backbone Lake had an E. coli bacteria reading of 320. Rock Creek Lake had an E.coli count of 73, down from 550 last week, but remains posted because it is over the geometric mean of 126 that includes at least five samples taken over a minimum of 30 days. All three of these beaches are on the list of eight lakes in Iowa that have had a history of high bacteria levels in the past,

Bacteria levels at beaches typically rise as a result of runoff from rainfall and can return to normal in less than two days with sunny conditions. Samples are collected from the beaches on Monday and Tuesday. There was widespread rain over much of Iowa in the last week likely elevating bacteria levels at some locations.

Extra monitoring to try and determine potential bacteria sources is being done at Beeds, Backbone, Rock Creek and Geode, according to Janice Boekhoff of the water monitoring section of the DNR.

The results for this week at the beaches being re-sampled were 250 at Geode, 280 at Big Creek, 240 at Nine Eagles and 300 at the state park area on the east side of North Twin Lake.

Results for Clear Lake, where a break in a sewer line resulted in sewage entering the lake on the west side earlier this week, showed low levels at McIntosh Woods State Park and at Clear Lake State Park. No advisories are needed at either beach.

Bacteria levels at Iowa's 27 other state park beaches are within acceptable levels.

The DNR is also advising normal precautions for contact with any surface water in Iowa:

- Avoid swallowing the water
- Avoid the water if you have open cuts or wounds that could become infected by contact with bacteria
- Swimming is not recommended for persons who are very young or very old and may have problems avoiding ingestion of water, and people who have weakened immune systems due to other medical conditions.

Weekly beach monitoring results are posted on the DNR's website every Friday afternoon at <http://www.iowadnr.com/news/beach.html>

For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395 or Janice Boekhoff, 319-335-1574.

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IOWA SCHOOLS MAKE HUGE CUTS IN BUS EMISSIONS

DES MOINES — Iowa's fleet of nearly 5,000 school buses is emitting 27 percent less harmful soot thanks to an ongoing voluntary cleanup effort that began in 2001, state officials announced today.

The emission reduction effort is part of the Bus Emission Education Program (BEEP), a non-profit collaborative effort of state and private groups. This week BEEP honored 75 Iowa school districts at the Iowa Pupil Transportation Association conference in Des Moines for their work in reducing emissions, saving fuel and prolonging engine life.

Twice annually, school buses undergo voluntary emissions tests that examine the amount of light blocked by soot and particulate matter. Dense, black tailpipe smoke signals engine deterioration and wasted fuel and a need for immediate repairs. The results are

given to the schools, who use the data to target repairs of higher emitting buses in their fleet.

“This is a tremendous and unprecedented voluntary cleanup of harmful pollutants,” said DNR Director Jeffrey Vonk, who presented awards to schools at the Iowa Pupil Transportation Association meeting in Des Moines earlier this week.

Reducing harmful diesel exhaust is a national priority with the U.S. EPA as children spend many hours riding school buses or near idling buses on playgrounds and schoolyards.

BEEP was formed to address the health concerns of diesel school bus emissions – linked to cancer, heart and lung disease and asthma. Nearly 50,000 Iowa children have asthma, a leading cause of school absenteeism.

The BEEP initiative is the first voluntary school bus emissions testing program in the nation. BEEP is a partnership among the Iowa Department of Education, Department of Natural Resources, School Administrators of Iowa, Iowa Pupil Transportation Association and Mirencro Inc.

For more information contact the DNR’s Brian Button at 515-281-7832 or Dave DeValois with Mirencro, Inc. at 515-899-216 or log on to www.beeponline.org.

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DNR REVISES FORMS FOR TURKEY/CHICKEN SIZE REQUIREMENTS

DES MOINES — The DNR recently revised the units used to measure turkey and chicken sizes on its construction permit and fee forms.

“The changes divide poultry into two size categories, acknowledging that full-size birds and poults are considerably different in body weight and manure production,” said Gene Tinker, coordinator of the DNR’s animal feeding operations.

Turkeys have been divided into two sizes: adult birds weighing seven pounds or more and poults of less than seven pounds. Chickens have been similarly divided into adult birds of three or more pounds and immatures of less than three pounds.

Putting poults into a different size category means that a producer raising chickens or turkeys can have more immature animals in confinement before needing a manure management plan or a construction permit than they would if they were raising adult birds.

The size categories on the forms were modified because of a change in state law that went into effect on May 21, 2003.

Forms are available for permitted and non-permitted facilities under animal feeding operations on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.com. The forms include information on how to determine the size of operation.

For more information, contact Gene Tinker at 515-281-3103.